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ABSTRACT

The document provides an example of the integration of career awareness into a half-year elective English course at the senior high school level. The project was designed to increase: knowledge of careers in general and specifically in the Boothbay Harbor, Maine area; awareness of how personal characteristics relate to job requirements, skill, and interest in performing a particular job; awareness of where to obtain printed material about job opportunities and related statistics; and knowledge and confidence in getting a job. Included in the guide are ideas for implementing a career awareness project, examples of assignments and exercises, a list of places visited and teaching aids purchased, reactions of the students, and recommendations for future projects. (Author/NJ)

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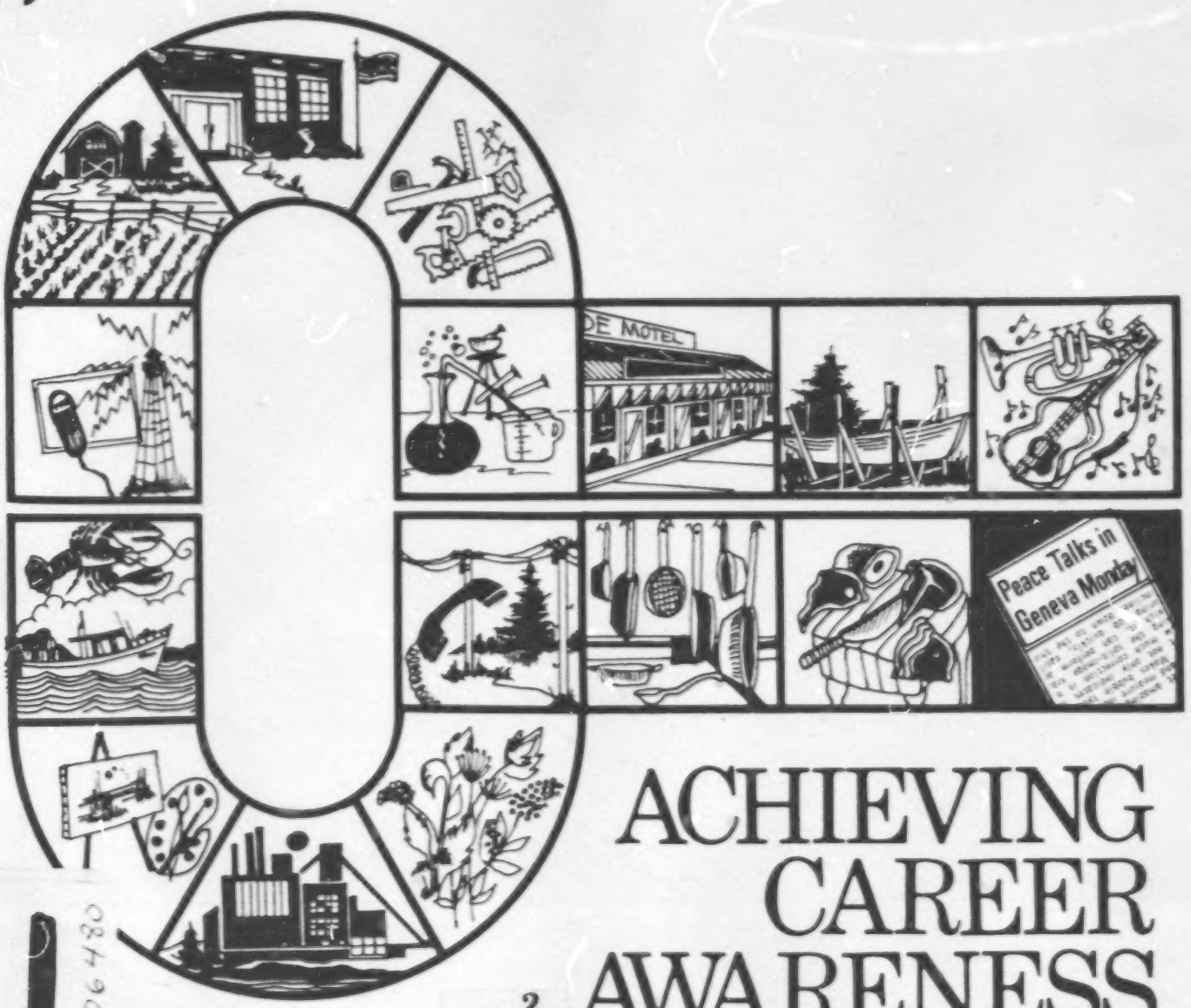

ACHIEVING CAREER AWARENESS

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ACHIEVING CAREER AWARENESS

A report of a state-funded project incorporated into the half-year English elective course entitled Oral Interpretation at Boothbay Region High School in Boothbay Harbor, Maine

The project started January 22, 1975, and was completed May 14, 1975

The funds were received from the Maine Research Coordinating Unit of the State Bureau of Vocational Education in Augusta, Maine

Mary Arno Beattie, Project Director
French/English teacher at Boothbay Region High School

June, 1975

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FOREWORD

This publication is an example of one way that career awareness can be incorporated into a class.

By receiving state funding this project got its start. The enthusiasm and ingenuity of the students soon helped to make it a success.

One of the members of the class took photographs which appeared, along with a short article, in the local paper after each visitation.

Career awareness can be incorporated into classes in a variety of ways. Because of the particular nature of the courses at Boothbay Region High School the A.C.A. project was implemented as a half-year elective course.

In this course, an effort was made to help the student gain a better self-perception, more self-confidence and an awareness of his/her work values, personality traits and interests as they relate to the world of work.

In preparing for this project, I am indebted to: Dr. Charles W. Ryan, Professor of Education at the University of Maine, Orono, for his advise and information.

M.A.B.

June 1, 1975

PREFACE

This manual is designed to provide an example of the incorporation of career awareness into one course in the high school.

It is not viewed as a definitive work in this area but only the ideas and experiences of one class and one teacher.

If other teachers get ideas from this manual, it will have served its purpose.

The manual provides:

1. Objectives for instigating career awareness in high school courses,
2. A view of potential growth on the part of students as a result of the project,
3. Ideas for implementing a career awareness project,
4. Examples of assignments and exercises,
5. A list of places visited,
6. A list of teaching aids purchased,
7. Reactions of the students to the project,
8. Recommendations for future projects.

CHAPTER I BACKGROUND INFORMATON

THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

Achieving Career Awareness (A.C.A.) was a state funded project aimed at helping high school students become more aware of the world of work.

The A.C.A. project was one of several funded through the Maine Research Coordinating unit of the State Bureau of Vocational Education in Augusta, Maine. Teachers and counselors were encouraged to submit project proposals which related to the improvement of career counseling in the classroom to Dr. Charles W. Ryan, director of the Research Coordinating Unit.

Because of the hypothesis that many high school seniors feel forced to make an occupational decision for which they are ill-prepared the A.C.A. project was implemented. It attempted to deal with two problems that many seniors face: 1.) What shall I do next year? 2.) What is there to do?

Many high school students are not aware of the job market within a one hundred mile radius of their homes. They lack knowledge of the education, training and personal qualities required for various careers.

The objectives of the A.C.A. project were:

1. To increase students' knowledge of careers, in general,
2. To increase students knowledge of careers within a one hundred mile radius of Boothbay,
3. To familiarize students with occupational literature: "Occupational Outlook Handbook," **Dictionary of Occupational Titles,**
4. To provide information relating to the proper procedure in applying for a job,
5. To provide experience contacting an employer,
6. To familiarize students with Holland's six Classifications,
7. To increase students' self-perceptions.

The anticipated results of the A.C.A. project were:

1. Increased knowledge of careers in general and specifically in the Boothbay - Augusta - Brunswick - Portland area,

2. Increased awareness of how personal characteristics relate to job requirements, skill and interest in performing a paticular job,

3. Increased awareness of where to obtain printed material about job opportunities and related statistics,

4. Increased knowledge and confidence in getting a job from start to finish.

CHAPTER II TEACHING AIDS

The following teaching aids were purchased with state funds for the A.C.A. project:

1. Three sets of Volume I, II and Supplement II of the **Dictionary of Occupational Titles,**
2. Twenty-five "Self-Directed Search" by John Holland,
3. The following career-related kits by J. C. Penny Company: Career Decisions, Value Clarification, Are You Listening, Education for Living, Preparing for an Interview,
4. Occupational Outlook Quarterly,
5. Occupational Exploration Kit by S.R.A.,
6. Funds for publication of a manual describing the A.C.A. project.

Other expenses incurred were:

1. Bus driver's salary,
2. Gasoline and toll expenses,
3. Substitute teacher's salary,
4. Postage costs,
5. Travel expenses,
6. Cost of long distance phone calls,
7. Film.

CHAPTER III IMPLEMENTATION

The A.C.A. project was incorporated into the English elective class entitled Oral Interpretation. This is a half-year English elective course designed to improve the students' speaking ability and to foster self-confidence.

In seeking to gain self-confidence, one must first gain self-awareness. To help students know themselves and their areas of interest better, Holland's "Self-Directed Search" was administered to all students who so desired. After the interest inventory had been administered and explained, the class discussed more fully Holland's six classifications.

After the class explored their interests, special abilities, hobbies and work-related values, the students submitted a list of areas of employment which they thought they would like to visit. We voted to visit the following: Intercommunication Equipment of New England Telephone Company, Guy Gannett Broadcasting, Jordan's Meat Company, all in Portland, Kennebec Daily Journal and Holiday Inn in Augusta, Lincoln County District Court and Maine Yankee Atomic Plant in Wiscasset, and Evergreen Valley in East Stoneham.

Before contacting an employer, the class decided what information the employer would need in order to approve our proposed visitation. Some points we covered were:

1. We would like to visit as a group of fifteen students with a teacher.

2. We would like to see the physical plant.

3. We would like to talk with an employer and employee(s),

4. Our purpose is to learn more about job opportunities and education and/or training required.

Also before contacting an employer, the class discussed basic points of seeking employment, such as:

1. How to find out about job opportunities.

2. How to find out that certain businesses exist.

3. How to find out that certain jobs exist.

4. How to sell yourself or your ideas.

5. How important it is to be definite about time, place and objective of a plant visitation.

One class was spent after each visit discussing our findings and exploring other employment in related fields. This was done by using a **Dictionary of Occupational Titles**.

Following is a list of some of the assignments that students prepared which attempted to combine the goals of oral interpretation and career awareness:

1. Each student was given two letters of the alphabet and was requested to find a business, industry, profession, etc., which began with that letter, that they would like to visit (they looked in the yellow pages of the telephone book for this information).

2. Students presented a short speech entitled: "The Ideal Job."

3. Students read and gave their opinions of articles relating to work that they clipped from the newspaper.

4. Students played a modified version of second grade "Show and Tell" in which they brought an example of one of their hobbies to class and explained what they do while pursuing this hobby and how it could become a means of earning money.

5. Students wrote a resume as if they were applying for a job, they then paired off and interviewed each other for a particular job.

6. All students compiled and presented to the class a project in which they had researched a certain occupation; they used various occupational literature to provide information such as: career cluster in which this job is found, a job description including education/training required, where the employee would work, working conditions, required aptitudes and temperaments, preferred interests and physical demands of the job.

7. Students reported on jobs in the past.

8. Students discussed work values, how they have changed over the years and how their work values differ from their parents'.

9. Students debated the following work related issues: Socialized medicine should be instituted in the U.S., the U. S. should give the Viet Nam refugees food, shelter, clothing and jobs, There should be no amnesty for draft dodgers.

10. Students were given a sentence which they read to the class and either agreed or disagreed with. Other members constributed their opinions of the topic (some topics were: People go to work eagerly. College graduates earn more than students who do not attend college. Welfare discourages work.)

11. Students wrote disguised autobiographies. Then someone read them and we tried to identify each other.

12. Students told what two values they felt were most important and why.

After each visitation, students wrote reaction reports, telling how they felt about the jobs they saw, what impressed them either positively or negatively, particular jobs that interested them and why, feelings (which were not actually expressed) that they sometimes got from the employees and/or employers. In general, these reports expressed how they reacted to the particular place of employment.

CHAPTER IV STUDENT REACTION

The students were eager to present their reaction to the visitations and were desirous that their ideas be included in the publication that we were preparing. I will attempt to summarize generally the main ideas expressed by the students.

The students' main concern was interest in and liking for the job. Salary, working conditions, fringe benefits, employment policies were all secondary to happiness on the job.

We were impressed with the variety of physical conditions which dictate dress and activity. At Jordan's we entered the lockers where the beef was hung. The employees wore long lab coats and walked carefully on the sawdust covered floors; at Guy Gannett, employees wore dress clothes and were careful what they said when certain microphones were turned on; at Evergreen Valley, employees often couldn't be distinguished from guests either by their style of dress or their actions.

We saw, felt and experienced the different environments. The students had the opportunity to actually "live" for a short time in several different work climates and to see to which they might best be able to adapt. While at Kennebec Daily Journal, we were aware of the interdependence of the workers and the need to be organized and accurate. Each person was required to perform his/her job efficiently so that the next person would be able to do likewise. We were aware that they were on a schedule and at times were meeting deadlines. Each person's job was delineated, he/she had specific things to do at definite times. Whereas, at Evergreen Valley we were impressed with the free, open atmosphere. Flexibility was a key quality in the environment as well as in the employees. People were hired who could do several jobs; wait on tables, sing, move furniture and act as desk clerk. At first, Evergreen Valley appeared to be a Utopia compared to some of the other places we had visited. We soon learned, however, that each job carries its unique work and pressures. The people at Evergreen Valley are servants to the public and must strive to please them and meet their desires, even when the circumstances make them disinclined to do so.

While talking with employees and employers we found that humanism is a very important word in the seventies.

Employers felt that the ability to get along well with others is a purchasable commodity — and they are looking for this ability along with the particular skills required of a given job.

Being flexible and multi-talented seem to be important qualities also. In the seventies potential employees must be able to do more than one job, be able to improvise and be creative.

The majority of the students were very interested in recreation-related employment. They liked the unique freedom and flexibility that often characterizes this field.

They would rather do many related jobs than specialize in one.

They do not want to be bored, work on an assembly-line, be supervised closely nor work for money only.

Many do not feel that college is necessary and cite examples of people in trade-related fields earning more money than college graduates.

Many students want to take a year off from school after graduation in order to "find themselves."

As the project progressed students seemed to feel that the choice of an occupation is a tangible process, not something that just happens. They saw that they could and should think about their work future now. They began to see how their summer employment had helped to shape their work values.

The students liked the A.C.A. project and expressed the desire for school to be more relevant and more similar to the world of work. They demand a use for what they study; they want their school subjects to relate to their life. Many would like to participate in a work/study program their senior year — even college-bound students expressed this desire.

CHAPTER V EVALUATION

Students were given a pre and post-test which required that they cite fifteen jobs, the training and/or education required for them and in what towns/cities in Maine these jobs can be found. They also wrote an essay entitled: "The Happiness of the Average Maine Worker" in which they included job hours, working conditions and/or other pluses or minuses of employment.

Students were able to cite more jobs in May than in January; they were more specific when describing various aspects of a job in May.

Many felt that the average Maine worker is happy in May, whereas in January they felt most people work for money only. After the visitations, the students expressed a feeling that workers had more dignity and pride for their work than they had thought. The students seemed to understand the working generation a little better after the visitations. The generation gap between workers and students might have closed a little. Students saw working situations first-hand. They were made aware of the reality of unemployment and the problems it creates. In short, the students were made aware of current job trends and employee/employer working conditions in a real and tangible manner, which led to increased knowledge and awareness and in some cases a change of attitude.

At the end of the course students wrote their opinions of the A.C.A. project; they attempted to write one sentence depicting a good point of the project and one depicting a short-coming.

Following is a list of student comments:

I liked the various trips we took because you got away from the every day routine of school for a day.

You could do what you pleased without teachers telling you to do this and that.

The trips were boring sometimes when we had to just sit and listen to a person constantly.

It was fun when we could wander around and when they let us try out machines.

You got to see a variety of jobs and meet many people and see how they work.

I think in this day and age kids really need a break from school, and this program gave them that. Something done out of school holds interest, no matter what it is, and where there's interest, there's learning. I learned a lot from the program that I never would have learned in school.

I think these Career Awareness trips have helped the majority of the class learn of jobs outside their own community.

And I hope we can use the knowledge of the trips someday when we are looking for a job, because we have covered a lot of working conditions that we either liked or disliked.

The time for the realization that high school students are young adults and not children has arrived. Thank God BRHS has realized this — and let us out of our cages at least once a month!

We need to get outside of the cocoon that has been wrapped around us called school. We at least have one wing free now, and soon the other wing will be also, letting us fly in whatever direction we find.

I think the trips we took have helped me to see some of the jobs and fields in Maine that I never knew about before. And I'm glad I got to go to see them.

The trips were very good. They gave me more insight into a job than a book would.

CHAPTER VI SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Career awareness could be an integral part of all school subjects. When planning a program aimed at increasing career awaeness it is helpful to have the support and cooperation of other staff members. The more faculty support achieved the more integrated the project can be.

All-day visitations seemed to leave the greatest impression. We were better able to experience our environment.

An exercise we didn't do but one which might be helpful to the students is to have them compile a report of the various aspects of an environment that appealed to them. Such data as: type of dress required, type of activity, inter-relationship of employees, and mood or climate of the area could be included in this report.

An effective way to show attitude change and knowledge gained is to ask the students to write their ideas about the world of work in the beginning of the course (keep the papers) and again at the end of the course. Students are surprised at their own attitude changes.

It would be helpful to designate one member of the class as secretary, one as finance director, another as itinerary coordinator, etc., so that the clerical parts of the project are divided among the students.

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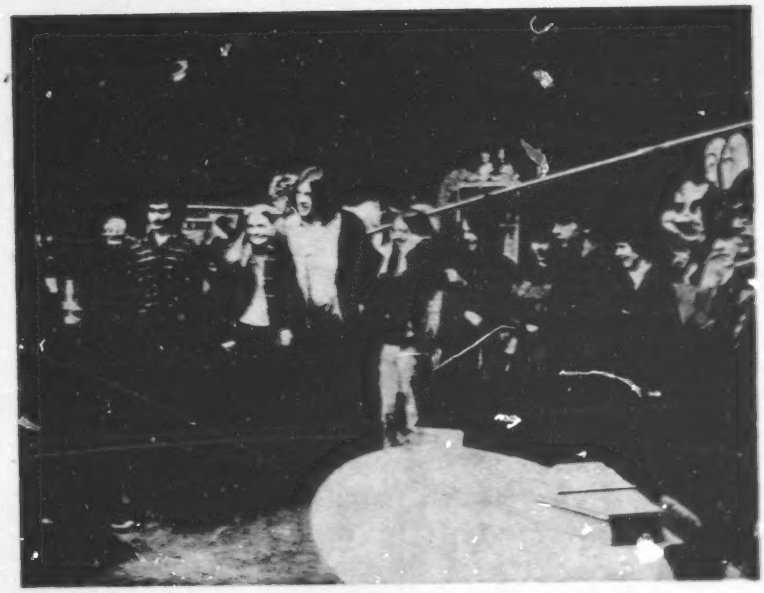
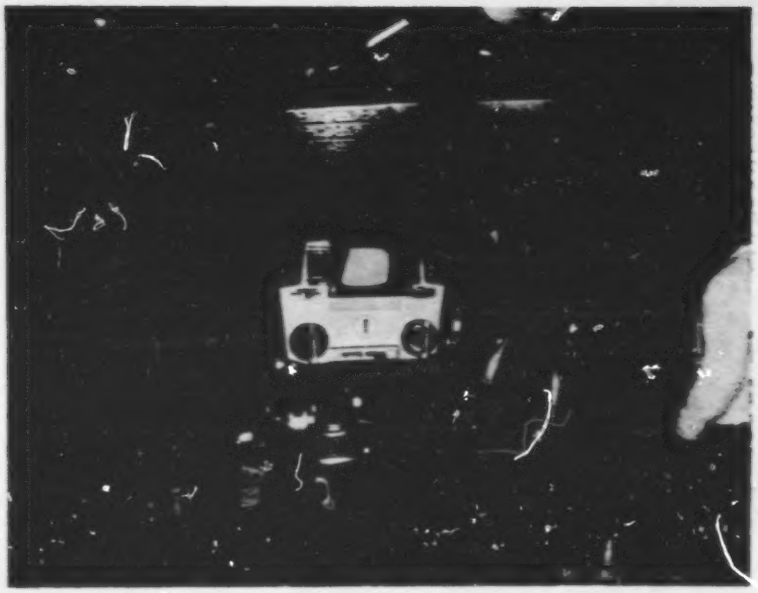


Students see themselves on television in Romper Room.

Students inspect an enormous phone book at New England Telephone Company in Portland.



Students receive a few tips from Bob O'Wril about weather broadcasting.

Students watch as film is spliced at Guy Gannett Broadcasting in Portland.